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RWANDA: Political Reconciliation

BACKGROUND

The U.S. and Belgium share the same overall views on Rwanda, including the basic goal of creating conditions that will facilitate repatriation and reconciliation, and the sub-goals of pressing on the International Tribunal and human rights monitors, supporting UNAMIR, promoting dialogue, assisting the Rwandan judiciary, and addressing camp security. Belgium has been one of the most active members of the Rwanda Operational Support Group (ROSG) since its initial meeting.

This week's Bujumbura refugee conference will almost certainly result in additional pressure on the GOR to make overtures to members of the Hutu diaspora who were not implicated in the genocide. All indications are that the GOR representatives will be in a defensive, truculent mood in Bujumbura. In a Feb. 13 preparatory meeting, the Rwandan delegate objected to several key elements in the preamble of the draft conference action plan, including any mention of reconciliation or an OAU role in Rwanda's refugee problem. We have expressed our concerns and are urging Rwandan cooperation at the conference.

In Amb. Rawson's view, the GOR wants the Rwandan people inside and outside the country to acquiesce to the new order because GOR leaders do not wish to take the political and (perceived) security risks associated with reaching out to the diaspora. Thus, we should be cautious in our expectations for any political breakthrough at the conference.

Finding a mediator and structuring a dialogue are agenda items for this week's Rwanda Operational Support Group meeting on the margins of the conference. We have not heard back yet from the Dutch on our (very discrete) proposal to have them serve as facilitator to spark a dialogue. We have informed the Belgians and French of our approach to the Dutch, but are otherwise treating the initiative as a close hold.

ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION

Efforts at Reconciliation/Dialogue

Belgian Views

- Belgium shares our view that the GOR should be broadly based and should reach out to Hutus not implicated in the genocide. The Belgians see the OAU as a likely mediator. However, the GOR would probably object for fear of facing the same African pressures to accommodate Hutus that Rwandan officials experienced during the January Nairobi summit.

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- The Belgians share our views of the importance of creating conditions that will facilitate reconciliation, including assisting the new government to restore basic services and rebuild the judiciary and pressing for rapid deployment of human rights monitors.

**U.S. Views/Objectives**

- We still believe that some facilitator is needed to spark a dialogue. He/she should sound out the Rwandan community in Rwanda and abroad to determine the best format in which to hold such a dialogue. This sounding out process would (hopefully) help identify valid interlocutors for the GOR.
- In addition to identifying a facilitator and creating a framework for dialogue, Amb. Rawson has suggested several confidence building initiatives which we might pursue, including:
  - progressive repatriation of orphans;
  - UNAMIR coordination with the GOR to "pre-clear" ex-FAR to accelerate repatriation and integration;
  - pre-clearing (with UN assistance) of administrative cadre and teachers who want to return;
  - incentives to pay teachers and administrators for returning;
  - borderland or capital city meetings of church leaders (with safe conduct passes for those leaders coming from the camps);
  - meetings of civil society in or out of Rwanda to bring together lawyers, women, human rights and youth groups from different political persuasions in search of common ground;
  - regularized consultation of local administrative and security officials in border areas with Tanzania and Zaire;
  - More private conferences which let GOR officials and external leaders discuss Rwandan problems in unofficial settings.

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